81-2/709

THE Religious Assemblies Of the People called QUAKERS VINDICATED:

I. From the Charge of their being *in Disturbance of the Publick Peace.*

II. From the Charge of being **Seditious Conventicles** mentioned in the Act of 22 *Car.* 2.

III. From the Charge of being *under Colour or Pretence of an Exercise of Religious Worship, in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy or Practice of the Church of* England.

Whereunto is Added

A more General Declaration In the CASE.

The Second Edition.

I. TO the first Objection, we may ask our Adversaries, What matter of Record * they can justly make against us, the said People, of due Conviction? either from any notorious Evidence of Fact, or Testimony of Credible Persons, or Confession of our own, as the Law provides, of any *formidable Posture* that we meet in, as that of *Vi & Armis*, or any *menacing Words* or *Threats* made by us, or of any *Contrivance of Insurrection*, which

* 5 R. 2. c. 7
15 R. 2. c. 2

Vet A3 d. 257

in the Eye of Law and Reaſon might be deemed or conſtrued to be *in Terrorum Populi*, or *in diſturbance of the publick Peace*, or of the nature of a *Riot?* If ſuch, ſhould not the matter and Circumſtances of the Fact be ſpecified upon ſuch Record as the Law enjoyns? But we utterly deny that we ever met in any ſuch formidable Poſture, as is of the nature or tendence of what the Law deems *in Terrorum Populi*. We meet peaceably to wait upon, and really to worſhip and ſerve the Almighty God, as our bounden duty, according to his Grace, Light and Underſtanding, which he hath given unto us by his Spirit.

H. 5. c. 8. In the 2d year of *Henry* the 5th, c. 8. "It is provided, that if "any *Riot, Aſſembly or Rout of People*, againſt the Law, be made "in any part of the Realm, then the Juſtices of the Peace, three, or "two of them at the leaſt, and the Sheriff or under-Sheriff of the Coun-"ty where ſuch *Riot, Aſſembly* or *Rout* ſhall be made hereafter, ſhould "come with the Powers of the ſaid County (if need were) to arreſt "them, and them ſhould Arreſt; and the ſame Juſtices, Sheriff or "under-Sheriff to have Power to Record *that which they have found ſo "done in their Preſence againſt the Law.* And that by Record of the ſame "Juſtices, Sheriff or under-Sheriff, ſuch Treſpaſſors or Offendors ſhould "be convicted in manner and form as is contain'd in the Statute 8 R. 2. 7. 5 R. 2. 2. "of *Forcible Entry, &c.* And in the ſame Statute it is provided, "That like Ordinances and Pains ſhould hold place and take "effect in Cities, Burroughs, and other places and Towns infranchiz'd, "which have Juſtices of the Peace within them.

Now let our Adverſaries and Perſecutors anſwer us; Where could any of them ever juſtly make any ſuch legal and due Conviction upon Record againſt us, for any ſuch *Riotous Meeting* or *Unlawful Aſſembly* on our parts, as hath been really in it ſelf of ſuch a nature and tendence as aforeſaid, *in Diſturbance of the publick Peace?* We poſitively deny that our Aſſemblies are of any ſuch nature, however miſ-repreſented by our Adverſaries.

II. *Objection*; If it be alledged, *That our Meetings or Aſſemblies are contrary to Law, and therefore in diſturbance of the publick Peace.*

Qu. We queſtion what Law or Statute they are contrary unto?

Obj. If it be anſwered, *They are contrary to an Act which is both Mandatory and Penal, made in the 22th year of King* Charles *the 2d, entituled,* An Act to prevent and ſuppreſs ſeditious Conventicles.

We Anſwer; 1ſt, That our Aſſembles are no ſuch as *Seditious Conventicles, i.e.* for *Sedition, Striſe* or *Rebellion againſt the Government.* 2dly,

'Tis

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'Tis a meer begging the Queſtion, to term our Aſſemblies *Seditious*; no ſuch thing has ever been proved againſt them as *Sedition*, that is, † *A ſtirring up to Rebellion or Diſcord, A raiſing a Faction* or *Mutiny*, as *Phillips* in his *New World of Words* explains it; But our Aſſemblies are for no ſuch deſign or end, nor could ever any overt Act of that kind or tendence be proved or juſtly charged againſt us, in relation to our Meetings, or otherwiſe: Therefore they are no *Seditious Conventicles* or *Aſſemblies*. 3*dly*, Our Aſſemblies are made up of no ſuch Perſons or People as have committed any ſuch dangerous Practices againſt the Government, as mentioned in the Preamble of the ſaid Act, 22 *Car.* 2. (though rude Informers and Diſturbers have come Riotouſly, and with Violence againſt us into our Meetings.) Neither are we any ſuch *ſeditious Sectaries, or diſloyal Perſons, who under pretence of tender Conſciences, have or may at their Meetings contrive Inſurrections*; as alſo the Preamble of the ſaid Act is ſpecified. We uſe no *Pretence* of tender Conſcience for any ſuch wicked end or deſign. The All-ſeeing and Heart-ſearching God knows our innocence and clearneſs herein; as alſo the Nation's long Experience can witneſs for us. And if *Titles* and *Preambles* of *Laws* be the *Keys of Laws*, and do evince or ſhew the Nature and reſpective Intentions thereof, then this ſaid Act againſt *Seditious Conventicles* (where *under pretence of tender Conſciences, Inſurrections have been or may be contrived*) doth not extend to us. We pretend nothing but what we really intend, viz. *The ſpiritual Worſhip and real Service of Almighty God*, who ſearches our Hearts, and whom we ſincerely reverence and fear.

† Sedition explained.

III. *Obj.* But if it be objected, *That the matter of Fact incurring the Fines and Penalties of the ſaid Act againſt Conventicles, is our Meeting under Colour or Pretence of an Exerciſe of Religious Worſhip, in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of* England, *or in other manner than is allowed thereby.*

Anſw. We anſwer; 1*ſt*, That the words [*Colour or Pretence*] have relation to the Preamble, as, *Who under pretence of tender Conſcience have or may at their Meetings contrive Inſurrections, as late Experience hath ſhown.* But ſuch pretence or colour of Religious Exerciſe, for any ſuch Contrivance, were abominable Deceit and Hypocriſie, and never chargeable upon us or our Aſſemblies: We can challenge the whole World to detect us herein. 2*dly*, We are not conſcious to our ſelves of any ſuch matter of Fact committed in our Aſſemblies, and on our part, which the Liturgy or Practice of the Church of *England* allows not. If we be herein charg'd, let's know what it is that we have done in our Aſſem-

blies, which the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England* allows not of, seeing the Liturgy allows of the holy Scriptures, which we are sure allow of [and enjoyn] Christians *Assembling together to wait upon and Worship God in Spirit and Truth*, and of the manner thereof, as to the places, whether *in Houses*, or *abroad in Fields* or *Mountains*, which is our case, both as to the matter and manner of our Assemblies.

Obj. If it be still objected, *That our Meetings are under colour and pretence of an Exercise of Religious Worship, in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England.*

Answ. We answer; *1st*, What that exercise of Religious worship is, that is in other manner than according to the Liturgy, should be explained unto us, and that according to Law, seeing this late Act against Conventicles does NOT explain *what Manner 'tis.*

† What other Manner the Liturgy allows not

But *2dly*, we find in a Statute made in the first year of Q. *Elizabeth*, chap. 2. that *that other Manner* is thus explained, *viz.* † "That if any Person or Persons whatsoever shall "by open Fact, Deed, or shall by open Threatnings compel "or cause, or otherwise procure or maintain any Parson, "Vicar or other Minister in any Cathedral or Parish Church, Chappel, "or in any other place, to sing or say any common and open Prayer, or "to minister any Sacrament otherwise, or in *any other manner* and *form* "than is mentioned in the said *BOOK*, *&c.* This does not at all reach our case, we are not found guilty hereof, and therefore are not condemnable by the Law in this case; this concerned the Clergy, not us; And we neither threaten, compel, cause, or any wise procure or maintain any Parson, Vicar, or any else to sing or say any common or open Prayer, or to minister any Sacrament in any Cathedral or Parish Church, &c. This we are so far from, that we compel No Body to any form of singing or paying in God's Worship, but perswade men to serve and worship God as he directs, and for that end desire all may come to his divine Grace and good Spirit in their hearts, to guide them in his holy Worship, both as to matter and manner of praying and praising his Name, that they may serve and worship him, *not in the oldness of the Letter, but in the newness of the Spirit, for such he is* (even in our days) *seeking to worship him, as must worship him in Spirit and in Truth*; And such both pray with the Spirit, and sing with the Spirit, and with Understanding, according to the antient Apostolical Testimony, and Practice of the primitive spiritual Christians.

Whereas

A more General Declaration,

Shewing the ſaid Peoples clearneſs from all Sedition, contriving Inſurrections and dangerous Practices, under any Colour or Pretence whatſoever.

WHereas there is lately publiſhed an Act, entituled, *An Act to prevent and ſuppreſs ſeditious Conventicles*; The words in the Preamble of which Act are as followeth; **For providing further and more ſpeedy Remedies againſt the growing and dangerous Practices of ſeditious Sectaries, and other diſloyal Perſons; who under pretence of tender Conſciences, have or may at their Meetings contrive Inſurrections (as late Experience hath ſhewn.)**

THe People of God in ſcorn called *Quakers*, are all free and clear from theſe Actions above, or before mentioned, and it doth not concern them; for *Quakers* Meetings are not ſeditious Conventicles, and therefore ought not to be ſuppreſt; neither have been, or are our Practices dangerous, but have alwayes been found peaceable and clear of ſuch things; and though we have been accuſed as Plotters, &c. and though we have been numbred amongſt ſeditious Perſons, yet nothing of that kind could ever be juſtly charged or proved againſt us. And as for the word, Diſloyal to the King. We have alwayes paid our Taxes and Aſſeſments, and other Dues and Duties, more than any People according to our abilities; and ſo the thing that belongs to *Cæſar* we give to *Cæſar*, and that which belongs to God we give to God, his Worſhip in Spirit and Truth, which is his Due. And we have kept our Meetings on our parts peaceably, who have been gathered together by the Lord, in the Name of Jeſus. And we do not meet together under a colour or pretence of tender Conſciences, to plot and contrive Inſurrections againſt the King, but meet together in the Power and Spirit of the Lord, without any ſuch pretence, but in reallity to worſhip and glorifie God in our Bodies, Souls and Spirits, which are his; and for ſo doing, it hath coſt many of our Friends

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and Brethren their Lives, by Impriſonment, Exile, and otherwiſe; neither dare we forſake the aſſemblings of our ſelves together, as the the manner of ſome was, &c. And our Meetings have been peaceable all along on our account, though rude People have come and railed againſt us, and abuſed us. And our Principle is, and ever was againſt ſuch practices as Sedition, or contriving Inſurrections, but it leads us to the peaceable Truth, and to ſeek the peace of all men, and to Chriſt Jeſus who is the Way to God, who is the Author of Peace. And ſo we are by Chriſt Jeſus taught to deny all Sedition, Conſpiracy and Inſurrection; and he doth teach us to deny all ſuch things, who was before all ſuch things, and ſeditious Sects were, and will be when they are all gone; for he is the ſame to day, yeſterday and forever.

And if any ſhould pretend tenderneſs of Conſcience, and religious Exerciſe, and under that colour intend a quite contrary thing, as to contrive Inſurrections, &c. this is groſs Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation, which our ſouls ever did, and do abhor, and deny; and ſuch are unlawful Meetings. And were not the Magiſtrates, as Mayors, Juſtices, and other Officers, &c. enjoyned by their Oathes before, to look after the preſervation of the Peace, againſt all ſuch ſeditious Meetings, as much as this Act doth require?

And if any Magiſtrate ſhould take hold upon any that are innocent of theſe actions, mentioned in the title and preamble of the Act, then whether or no (the innocent Perſon being defamed, beſides his ſuffering and ſpoiling of his Goods) the Lord will not take notice to defend the Innocent, and judge for ſuch things?

Now if four beſides the Family do meet that are ſeditious Spirits, may not many ſuch little Meetings do more hurt then if there were two or three hundred together? for then they may ſpeak out their minds to one another, which they could not before hundreds of mixt People? Now if *Cæſar* muſt have his due, muſt we not meet together to give God his due?

And if ſuch an Act ſhould have been made by the *Jews* in the dayes of Chriſt, would it not have taken hold of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles? for had not he twelve with him, and ſeventy, and ſometimes hundreds, and thouſands? And did not Chriſt and his Apoſtles keep Meetings in Deſarts, Mountains, by Sea-ſide, on Ship-board, in private Houſes, beſides Temple and Synagoges? And was there not many Sects amongſt the *Jews*, yet all profeſt God? And are there not ſeveral Sects in *Turkey*? Do not *Jews*, and *Turks*, and *Chriſtians*, keep their Meetings on ſeveral days diſtinct? And in the *Mogul*'s Country are there

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not ſeveral Religions? And in *Germany*, and the low Countries, and in many parts of *Chriſtendom*, and other parts of the World, are there not ſeveral Religions? and yet they have their peaceable Liberty. And did not God let *Adam* have liberty in the Earth? And *Abraham* did not only let *Iſhmael* have liberty, but relief in the Wilderneſs? So why ſhould not they have liberty that be Innocent, to wait upon and worſhip God, who are clear from Sedition, and contriving Inſurrection under pretence of tender Conſciences, or any pretence whatſoever? Concerning which, we that are called *Quakers*, can ſay in the preſence of God, We are free and clear from, and teſtifie to all men, though we have been ſo accuſed, and have been tryed by Impriſonment to death, and Baniſhment, and ſpoiling of Goods, yet were alwayes innocent, and ſo we are the ſame to this day, who do exerciſe a good Conſcience towards God, and towards all men.

And are any to be credibly informed againſt or ſuppreſt, but ſuch as are known to be ſeditious, and are of that ſpirit, that under a pretence of tender Conſcience plot and contrive Inſurrections? If ſo, then whether innocent and peaceable People, that meet really to worſhip God in the Spirit, and in the peaceable Truth (which all plotting is out of) theſe are concerned according to the title and reaſon of this Act?

And whether the Liturgy doth not allow of People to meet together, to worſhip God in Spirit and Truth, without limitation of time, place or number? For ought not men at all times, and in all places, to perform their bounden duty to God, and to pray to him, and to give thanks for his Benefits, which they daily receive? And doth not the Lord ſay, *In every place Offerings ſhall be offered to my Name? Mal.* 1. And doth not the Apoſtle ſay, *I will that men Pray every where, lifting up holy Hands without wrath and doubting?* And, *As every man hath received the Gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Graces of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. And did not Chriſt, to incourage his little Flock, ſay, *Whereſoever two or three are gathered together in my Name, I am in the midſt of them?* Not limiting them to that number, and no more, as you may ſee how Chriſtianity after ſpread, as the Epiſtles to the Churches declare. So this is not to hinder them that be peaceable in Chriſt Jeſus, from meeting either in a Barn, Houſe, Field, Back-ſide, or any other place; for they met thouſands with him in the Wilderneſs. And doth not the Prophet ſay, *The holy One muſt not be limited?* And doth not the Liturgy allow of the ſame Worſhip and Meetings as the holy Scriptures allow of?

The terms of the Title and Preamble explained.

Seditious, is Contentious, Factious, loving Diſcord.

Conventicle, is, A little private Aſſembly, commonly for ill (commonly ſo taken, the Doors being ſhut) [defined by the Law] ſuch, wherein many do impart to others their meaning, to kill a man, &c. as alſo where Conſpiracies, Confederacies are; See *Lamb.* 173, 177.

And ſuch are unlawful Aſſemblies, or *Conventicles*, as conſiſt of a number of People, gathered together diſorderly, for the cauſe of ſome one, or of a few Perſons that are Riots, againſt which theſe Statutes were provided, 13 *H.* 5. *cap.* 8, 19. and 19 *H.* 7. *cap.* 13. and before them were the Statute of *Nort.* 2 *E.* 3. *cap.* 3. laid upon them, 2 *R.* 2. *cap.* 6.

Seditious Conventicles, are little private factious Aſſemblies, where Diſcord, Rebellion or Inſurrection is contrived, plotted, deſigned or intended.

Diſloyal Perſons, are ſuch as are Treacherous, Trayterous, Falſe, Deceitful, breakers of Promiſe, and the like.

Seditious Sectaries, are taken for ſuch people as are Factions and Rebellious, being of a different Profeſſion from the ancient Truth; or ſuch as therein are divided into Sides and Parties, following ſuch as are Leaders in Faction, Rebellion and Schiſm.

From all theſe evil things, the People of God, called Quakers, *are clear, and freed by the Power of God, which was before all ſuch things were; who are Profeſſors of Chriſt Jeſus, the ancient Truth, before Sects were.*

So our deſires are in tenderneſs to all Magiſtrates for their good, that they may put a difference between the Precious and the Vile, and ſuch as ſerve God, and ſuch as ſerve him not; and ſo that they all in the pure Wiſdom of God from above, may mind and take notice of theſe things, from them that deſire the King's, and their everlaſting good and proſperity in the Truth, which the Devil is out of.

London, *Printed and Sold by* Andrew Sowle, *at the Crooked-Billet, in Hollyway-Lane in* Shoreditch, 168[illegible].

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